

Appendix C.

Local Priority Setting Process

Summary

In the state fiscal year 2000 grant and loan process last year, Ecology included an approach for awarding points based upon locally derived priorities. This was part of an overall pilot grant and loan process recommended to Ecology in November 1998 by the Financial Assistance Restructuring Committee. The Committee recommended Ecology allow for a total of up to 100 points of the project evaluation criteria to be awarded to eligible projects that have been ranked by local governments, tribes, conservation districts, and certain special purpose districts. These points are referred to as local prioritization points.

Applicants and administrators reported numerous difficulties in implementing the local prioritization process last year. Nonetheless, over 80 percent of all projects proposed last year were awarded points for submitting local priorities. In summer 1999, the successes and problems of the local prioritization process were presented to the Water Quality Financial Assistance Council. The Council recommended that Ecology retain, but make improvements to the local prioritization process.

Changes from FY 2000

For state fiscal year 2001, Ecology's Water Quality Financial Assistance Council has recommended changes to improve the local prioritization process. Those changes are included in this guidance and are summarized as follows:

All Local Priorities Must be Contained Within a Water Resource Inventory Area: Last year, applicants were given a choice of using a water resource inventory area (WRIA) or a county boundary for listing priorities. This year, points will be awarded only to priorities submitted on a WRIA basis.

Fewer Signatures are Required: Instead of needing signatures from every member comprising a required organization (e.g. every city within a project proposal WRIA), signatures will be required only from the largest city (population), largest (service area) conservation district, largest (service area) special purpose district providing wastewater services, all counties with jurisdictional responsibility for at least 25 percent of the area within the WRIA boundary, and all Indian tribes with reservations or fishing rights.

Organized Local Planning Groups:

As an alternative to submittals from the five required organizations, an organized local planning group may also submit a statement of agreed priority provided they represent at least three of the five required organizations and they have informed those required organizations not participating of their intent and submitted priorities.

Definitions

Project Proposal WRIA: In order to be eligible for local priority points, the project proposal area shall be a Water Resource Inventory Area.

Required Organizations: Governmental entities or special districts as follows:

City - the largest (in population) incorporated city, town or municipal corporation within the project proposal WRIA.

Counties - all counties with jurisdictional responsibility for at least 25 percent of the area within the project proposal WRIA boundary.

Conservation District - the largest (service area) organized and operating conservation district within the project proposal WRIA.

Special Purpose District - the largest (in population) special purpose district (public) providing wastewater services, including but not limited to sewer, water & sewer districts, or public utility districts within the project proposal WRIA.

Tribes - all federally-recognized tribes with reservations or fishing rights within the project proposal WRIA.

Organized Local Planning Group: An organized local planning group sponsored and operating with the support and assistance of local governments and which includes representatives of three or more required organizations. Organized local planning groups may include planning units organized under Chapter 90.82 RCW (Watershed Planning Act), 2496 (Salmon Recovery Act), or Chapter 400-12 WAC (Puget Sound Watershed Planning).

Statement of Agreed Priority: A written document that contains a numeric priority ranking for eligible projects within a project proposal WRIA and which contains the signatures of representatives of the required organizations and/or organized local planning group agreeing to support or not object to the specific ranking included.

Eligibility Requirements for Local Prioritization Points

Local prioritization is elective and applicants do not have to engage in or complete this process to be eligible for funding consideration. However, projects will not be awarded local prioritization points if the process described here is not followed. The maximum points available through the local prioritization process is 100 points.

Applicants within a given WRIA boundary must decide among themselves on how they will convene and conduct the prioritization process. An organized local planning group may already be in existence which can be utilized or representatives from the required organizations can be contacted and a process developed to solicit their input for priorities. Additionally, it is up to the applicants, or those participating in the local participation process, to decide among themselves on how the statement of agreed priorities will be completed and submitted to Ecology.

Process for Establishing Local Priorities

In order to be eligible for local prioritization points, the following must occur:

1. All projects proposed for local prioritization must meet all funding program eligibility requirements.

2. Only one statement of agreed priority can be submitted per WRIA.
3. All projects proposed for local prioritization must be assigned a numeric priority (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.).
4. Only one project per WRIA shall be given a unique ranked number (i.e., only one number 1 prioritized project, only one number 2 prioritized project, etc.) regardless of the number of projects proposed or regardless of the entity proposing the projects. If more than one project within a project proposal WRIA is submitted with the same ranked number, neither of the conflicting projects will receive local prioritization points.
5. All statements of agreed priority must include original signatures. If multiple documents are submitted to expedite signature collection, all submittals must contain original signatures.
6. Signatures must be from at least one of the following levels of authority: Mayor; Tribal Chair; County Executive; City Manager; Chair of an elected commission or council; or lead agency representative for organized local planning group. If signatures other than those specified above are used, a statement of delegated authority must be provided to validate the signature indicated.

If a statement of agreed priority is submitted from the five required organizations, only one signature is required from each of the organizations within the project proposal WRIA.

Signature means that the respective organization is in agreement with or does not object to the assigned numeric priorities reflected in the project proposal WRIA.

7. If a statement of agreed priority is submitted from a organized local planning group, only one signature is required from the organizing body of that group. Signature means that the organized local planning group is in agreement with or does not object to the assigned numeric priorities reflected in the project proposal WRIA. All required organizations not represented on the organized local planning group must be notified by registered or certified mail of the group's intended priorities. Objections by the non-represented group can be used to disqualify the submitted priorities from local prioritization points.
8. Any required organization can object to the numeric priorities submitted in their respective project proposal WRIA. Objections with a stated rationale on specific proposed projects must be submitted to Ecology in writing. If received by Ecology, Ecology will (a) forward the objection to those submitting the statement of agreed priority for resolution; or (b) disqualify all priorities within the WRIA from being awarded local prioritization points.

9. Ecology will award points based upon successful completion of the local prioritization process. Where successfully completed, projects ranked number one through ten will be separated by increments of ten-points while projects ranked 11th and greater will receive five points each. Non-ranked projects will receive zero points.
10. Ecology may also consider awarding points to projects on a case by case basis where statements of agreed priority are not signed by all required organizations. However, since Ecology is making it easier for groups to submit statements of agreed priorities this year (i.e., all entities within a watershed are no longer to submit signatures, only the largest), Ecology will typically NOT award local priorities points where a required group is missing and written proof of reasonable and prudent efforts to notify that group is not submitted to Ecology
11. The Department of Ecology must receive the statement of agreed priority no later than April 14, 2000.

STATEMENT OF AGREED PRIORITY

DATE

Kim McKee
Financial Management Section
Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, Washington 98504 - 7600

Re: FY 2001 Grant/Loan Application - Statement of Agreed Priority

Dear Mr. McKee:

We the undersigned submit the following project(s) for consideration of local prioritization points under the funding selection process for state fiscal year 2001 Centennial Clean Water Fund, Washington State Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund, and Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Fund consideration.

Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) # _____

Proposed Project Ranking:

Locally Ranked Project	Project Title (Insert title and other means for identifying the project here. Attach additional information, if needed).
# 1	
# 2	
# 3	
# 4	
# 5	
# 6	
# 7	
# 8	
# 9	
# 10	
> #10	
Non-ranked	

We the undersigned certify that we are legally authorized representatives of water quality entities for prioritizing environmental and water quality projects and initiatives within the project area. We certify that we agree or do not object with the numerical priority ranking for proposals given in this letter. Additionally, we certify that no other eligible water quality project for the proposed project area has or will be submitted to the Department of Ecology with the same priority ranking given in this letter.

Signed:

Title of Local Planning Group

And / Or

County(s)

City

Conservation District

Special Purpose District

Tribe(s)